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## Grand Canyon News Release

Release date: Immediate

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### **Fire Update: Grand Canyon National Park, August 5, 2009:** Cape Royal Road on the North Rim Re-opens with Pilot Car Escorts

**Grand Canyon, Ariz.** – The Cape Royal Road on the North Rim of Grand Canyon National Park has re-opened with pilot car escorts from 9:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m. daily.

#### **Fire Activity**

The Aspen Fire, located on the Walhalla Plateau east of the North Rim developed area, is now estimated at 2,123 acres and continues to burn within the 2001 Vista Fire perimeter. Much of the fire is burning in residual dead and down logs from the 2001 fire along with ponderosa pine, white fir and Mexican locust re-growth.

Approximately 125 firefighters and management support staff are assigned to the Aspen fire. Cooperating agencies include the National Park Service, the US Forest Service, the Bureau of Land Management and the Central Yavapai Fire District.

Five additional fires are currently being monitored and managed in Grand Canyon National Park. All are on the North Rim:

- The **Angel Fire** (9 acres) is now being suppressed.
- The **Butte Fire** (5 acres) is inactive.
- The **Point Fire** (2 acres) was contained last week and is in monitor status.
- The **Poplar Fire** (0.1 acres) is being managed for resource benefits and is smoldering in dead and down logs from the 2003 Poplar Fire.
- The **Thompson Fire** (1 acre) has been controlled and is in monitor status.

#### **Management Objectives**

Fire management objectives for the Aspen fire are to:

- Provide for public and firefighter safety.
- Minimize fire spread to the east of Cape Royal Road.

- Avoid disturbance to any cultural or natural resources.
- Continue monitoring fire behavior and growth.
- Manage for natural resource benefit.

The natural resource benefits fire managers expect to achieve include: maintaining fire in a fire-dependent ecosystem, reducing heavy fuel loads that can increase the risk of large fires that exhibit undesirable fire behaviors and effects, recycling of nutrients and diversification of wildlife habitat.

### **Community Meeting Scheduled**

A community fire update meeting will be held today at 6 PM at the North Rim Emergency Services building, located one mile north of the North Rim Lodge on Highway 67. The general public and community members are invited to talk with fire managers concerning local fire activity and fire management objectives.

### **Smoke**

Smoke from the Aspen Fire is visible from both the North Rim developed area and the South Rim viewpoints. Smoke has also been settling into Bright Angel Canyon during the evening hours. Coordination with the Arizona Department of Environmental Quality is ongoing.

### **Roads and Restrictions**

- The Cape Royal Road is open with pilot car escorts from 9:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m. daily.
- All other roads and facilities in the park are open.
- Some backcountry restrictions may apply on the Walhalla Plateau as firefighters continue to manage the Aspen Fire. Check in at the North Rim Backcountry Office for the most current information.

For Aspen fire information, please contact Connie Birkland at 928-638-7066. For information on the Grand Canyon National Park fire management program, please visit the park's web site at: <http://www.nps.gov/grca/parkmgmt/firemanagement.htm>. For backcountry information in the park, please call the backcountry office at 928-638-7875.

Additional news releases about these fires will be posted as significant changes in size, fire activity or management objectives occur.

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